MODERN COMEDY;

OR,

IT IS ALL A FARCE.

A

DRAMATIC AFTERPIECE,

IN

THREE ACTS.

London

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1792.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR TIBBULT TRUNCHEON—*partial to private theatricals.*
MAJOR DAGGER—*his friend, a sarcastic wit.*
MIDDAY—*the Major's companion, free of his opinion.*
BASHFUL—*an author of affected diffidence.*
EPIC—*a tragic poet.*
SNARL—*a critic.*
PRATE—*an innkeeper.*

Mrs. DOROTHY TRUNCHEON—*sister of Sir Tibbult.*

The Characters introduced in the Comedy.

ROMULUS.
MARCUS—*his general.*
TATIUS—*King of the Sabines.*
SULPHURIUS—*his general.*
TREMULUS—*father of Sulphurius.*
TWADDLE—*a fop.*
FOOL—*of great esteem for his wit in the court of Tatius.*
First Officer.
Second Officer.

QUEEN—*to Tatius.*
HERSILIA—*her daughter.*
Soldiers, Attendants, Virgin Sabines, &c. &c. &c.

SCENE.—Principally at SIR TIBBULT TRUNCHEON'S in the country.

TIME OF ACTION—One evening.

MODERN COMEDY;

OR,

IT IS ALL A FARCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Inside of an Inn.*

Enter PRATE, *introducing Major* DAGGER *and Mr.* MIDDAY.

PRATE *(whilst entering).*

HORSES there for Sir Tibbult Truncheon's!

Major. How far did you say it was to his house?

Prate. Four short miles, Sir—but rough roads—I wou'd recommend four horses—but that seems interested; therefore I'm mum. I presume, Gentlemen, that you are going to Sir Tibbult's Ton Theatrical?

Midday. Is much company gone then?

Prate. Aye, indeed, ſir—his honour's *private* theatre makes a *public* ſtir.

Maj. It anſwers to you, I dare ſay, as well as a *general election.*

Prate. Better, infinitely, ſir—it *pays* as it *goes*—you're ſure of your money. But, perhaps, you are *two of the elected—therefore I'm mum.* In truth, it beats all amuſements, ſave one—*a firſt-rate boxing match*; for drinking's as ſurely the reſult of fighting, as fighting is of drinking! But, perhaps, you *ſpar*, gentlemen, *therefore I'm mum.* Yet, this I muſt ſay, that we *public-houſe-keepers* ought to erect a monument of *gratitude* to *Will Shakeſpeare* and *Tom Johnſon*, for inſpiring our youths of faſhion with the love of thoſe two arts, *ſpouting* and *boxing!* O, ſir, they have been the making of many a public-houſe, at the riſk of Criſtian blood, and honourable credit!

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. A Mr. Baſhful begs to ſpeak with Major Dagger.

Maj. Shew him in directly—and do you, Prate, order a chaiſe to be got ready.

Prate. A chaiſe and *four*, directly. *(Aloud).*

Maj. Stop, ſtop—a pair will do for us two.

Prate. A pair only!—*then I'm mum.* *(Exit.*

Maj. My friend, Baſhful, I preſume, is on his road to the theatrical—for this ſaid *Baſhful*, in ſpight of his name, follows the trade of an *author.*

Mid. I have heard of him—he writes comedies, or tragedies, or pantomimes, or ſome ſuch things.

Maj.

Maj. Why, in truth, and I am ſorry to ſay it, that he does not directly write them—but, like half of our dramatic authors, borrows a pretty thought here, and a neat incident there, till the united favours complete a whole piece.—He's a trading ſcribbler, as it were, running about to all private performances, to patch up prologues, and compoſe *complimentary* verſes on all the performers of *any conſequence* concerned therein.—But here he comes—Speak as ſeverely as you pleaſe, and you cannot offend him—for, through an affectation of modeſty, he has the d——ſt aſſurance of any author breathing.——Baſhful, happily met! Mr. Midday, Mr. Baſhful!

Enter BASHFUL *(with a bundle of papers).*

Baſh. Major Dagger—ſtab me but I'm happy to ſee you. Poor Baſhful is ſtill alive you ſee—ſtill breathing under his *literary weight.*

Maj. Your *manuſcript plays*, I preſume—if ſo, they muſt be *d——d heavy*, indeed!

Mid. Nay, Major, that's too *pointed.*

Baſh. As you obſerve, ſir, it is too *well* POINTED—and, therefore, like a *lancet*, enters the *eaſier, without pain.* But, jeſting a-part, are you for Sir Tibbult's?

Maj. To be ſure—a new piece is to be rehearſed there to-night.

Mid. An Opera, I underſtand.

Baſh. Not *actually* an OPERA—but a COMEDY WITH SONGS. This ſyſtem of œconimical writing has been moſt practiſed, if not invented, by us modern authors. You muſt know the piece is mine—and, in ſpite of all my modeſty, I muſt own, that I have particularly well ſucceeded in

this happy ſpecies of writing. Variety is the ſoul of theatrical compoſition—and as wit, either from a decay of abilities in the author, or of judgment in the audience, is now deemed unneceſſary to inſure ſucceſs, we have given the heavieſt compoſition a gaiety of appearance, merely by interſperſing the *L'Allegro* or the *Il Penſoroſo* air, as it ſhall connect with the ſcene in action!

Mid. And it ſucceeds?

Baſh. If the *ſcenery* and *dreſſes* are *ſtriking*, with wonderful *eclat*. Nor ſhall I be ſurprized, if, in a few ſeaſons, we were to be entertained with quavering Brutus's and piping Alexanders; nay, that the very *battles* ſhall be *fought* in *harmony*, and the *pierc'd* heroes *kick time* with the *torture* of their *wounds*, and, like expiring ſwans, die with a ſeſtinuto air trembling on their lips.—O! it would have a fine effect, for the *conqueror* and *conquered* to part in a *friendly* duet!

Mid. Such a *Chriſtian-like parting* could not fail to pleaſe by its *moral*, if not by its *action*;—and I have no doubt, ſir, but that the piece to be exhibited to-night, is in poſſeſſion of all *modern qualifications* to render it pleaſing, and entertaining!

Baſh. Though I am the laſt man in the world to flatter my own deſerts—yet I confeſs, that I have long been honoured with the applauſe of my *friends*, who, 'tis well known, are the *laſt* people in the world to *allow merit*, even where it is *due*—and I cannot, in compliment to *their* good judgment, entirely miſtruſt my own abilities. But I had rather be condemned as an ignorant fellow, than be bluſhingly compelled to ſtand

ſtand forth a ſelf-patron of my own merits!—But genius will ſhew itſelf—and as I hate ſelf-commendation, I will conclude by remarking, that I never ſaw a *comedy*, that for *ſcenery*, SENTIMENT, and *dreſs*, ſo well deſerved the plaudits of an audience, as the one in rehearſal this evening—It is but fair to ſay it.

Maj. You could not favour us with a *peruſal* of it *previous* to its being performed—that we might provide ourſelves with a *knowledge* of what the *actors* are about?

Baſh. No—the laſt copy was left with Mrs. Dorothy Truncheon, an old maiden ſiſter of Sir Tibbult, for *her* reviſion.

Mid. What! ſubmit to a *lady's judgment* in a matter of *literary* concern!

Baſh. No, no—I'm not come to that yet.—The old girl acts as as Lord Chamberlain to the party—and peruſes every new piece previous to its performance, to clear it of all obſcenity, double entendres, &c.

Mid. And pray, ſir, what may be the *name* or *title* of your *comedy?*

Baſh. There, again—I dare ſwear, gentlemen, you think it as eaſy to chriſten a *play* as an *infant.*

Dag. It ought—for it hurts me to ſay, that the *titles* of half of our plays, have as *little* concern with the conduct of the piece, as the *plot* has.

Baſh. I know this for a fact—that 'tis as common to write to the *title* of a piece, as to its *plot*—a *ſtriking name is every thing*—*pertinent queſtions* and *deſcriptive ſentences* have had their run—and even *battles*, *ſieges* and *ſurrenders* are loſing their *comic effect*;—but, thanks to my good for-

tune—I will not ſay to my genius—I have gone one ſtep higher—for I think, from the very TITLE I have given my comedy, the audience cannot doubt of entertainment.

Mid. And it is called——

Baſh. "THE RAPE OF THE SABINES."—The very name is in itſelf a *comprehenſive plot.*

Dag. Indeed it is—fit for either *tragedy, comedy,* or *pantomime.*

Baſh. There's ſcope for an author of any handling!!—*ſentiment, incident, ſcenery,* and *dreſs!!!*—We need *no more,* to render it, as it were involuntarily, a *comedy* of the *firſt* character—the very *action* muſt prove *novel* to the ſtage.——

Dag. To the *public* ſtage, certainly—and if the ſpirit of it is but *properly* acted up to—it muſt have a very *ludicrous* effect.

Mid. It aſtoniſhes me, Mr. Baſhful, that an author of your reported merit ſhould confine his abilities to a private theatre.

Dag. He modeſtly thinks, that the more *private* he can keep his performances, the better.

Baſh. To ſpeak the opinion of my friends, I am an injur'd man. In me you behold one, ſir, who has ever made it his ſtudy to pleaſe; for which he has experienced the moſt ungrateful returns. Would you believe it, ſir, that I was *one whole year* putting together a piece——

Maj. Which the audience pulled to pieces in *one night.*

Baſh. As I hope for the bays, 'twas nearly ſo—and, to ſpeak the opinion of my friends, without even meriting it—and, indeed, I may ſay, that the comedy had every requiſite to eſtabliſh it as a firſt-rate piece—that is, my friends think ſo—but I would not ſay ſo for the world!

Mid.

Mid. In ſhort, Mr. Baſhful, it ſeems from your *own* account, that a *modeſt* reſerve has been the ruin of you.

Baſh. I am not aſhamed to own it—and I had rather humbly periſh from a laudable diffidence, than make my own confidence the ladder of my ambition. Yet, to ſpeak of the comedy as an *impartial* critic, I muſt own that it had *one* fault, to which I may ſafely impute its failure!

Dag. It wanted *common ſenſe*, perhaps.

Baſh. No—d—n it—in ſpight of all my modeſty, I can't allow that.

Mid. The *plot* was too *intricate*.

Baſh. That was *impoſſible*, it being formed on the *neweſt* model, without any *direct* plot at all!

Dag. Then it muſt be deficient in *wit*.

Baſh. Suppoſe it *had* been—would it have *ſucceeded* the *worſe* for that?—No—it had even *ſcenery* and *dreſs* to a miracle beautiful! But it wanted *variety*—there was not one *tear of ſenſibility* introduced throughout the whole *comedy*—one *continued ſameneſs of pleaſantry* all the way through;—and, as times go, you muſt allow, *that* was ſufficient to damn any COMEDY.

Mid. Pitiable, indeed!

Dag. Yet, in truth, and I am ſorry to ſay it—if the taſte of the town is depraved, it is owing more to a lack of good writers, than to a want of judgment in itſelf. An audience is not only the moſt impartial, but moſt generous of critics; their tender regard for an author's happineſs has often encouraged with applauſe, what a ſeverer criticiſm ought to have condemned—and as they ſeldom approve without a ſhew of libe-

rality, ſo they never condemn but from the cleareſt conviction of merited oppoſition!

Baſh. Vaſtly fine! noble ſentiments! a mere *catch clap* as we authors term it—and would pleaſe in any theatre in Europe. But curſe me if I think ſo—No, ſir, the town has damned one piece of mine, and damn me if *I* think——that is, if *my friends* think the audience any critic at all. Refinement has ruined the conſtitution of their wit—formerly, their taſte could ſtand the ſubſtantial feeding of ſtrong bon-mots, high-ſeaſoned innuendos, and ſtaunch ſatire; but now, their ſtomachs are ſo palled with *delicate ſentiments* and French ſoup-like compoſitions, that they ſicken at any diſh of pleaſantry, ſent up with the blunt honeſty of Engliſh cookery. They prefer French paſte to the diamond. Nothing but *light* comedy can now *float* on the ſurface of public approbation!

Mid. Light bodies, Mr. Baſhful, ever muſt *keep uppermoſt*—'tis the *weightier* ſenſe of Engliſh plays that *ſinks* them. But in a private theatre, you know you're ſafe—none but *friends* decide there on your merits.

Baſh. Ha! *ſafer*, truly, becauſe amongſt *friends*.—Why, ſir, I'll maintain, that the zeal of friends, nine times out of ten, is as dangerous to the credit of an author as the impartiality of unprejudiced critics. Beſides, it requires no little knowledge of heraldry, to write for theſe private theatricals—for you cannot offend them ſo much as to put a man of *inferior* rank into a *ſuperior* character.—and I find more trouble in ranging the dramatis perſonæ in juſt family order, than a maſter of ceremonies can at a city

a city aſſembly;—and you know, and every body knows, what it is to offend an actor—O Lord! never offend an actor!

Mid. You ſpeak with the *feelings* of an *author*, ſir.

Enter PRATE.

Prate. The chaiſe, gentlemen, is ready.

Dag. You're in luck, Baſhful.

Baſh. *(To Midday)* and theſe damned fellows—gentlemen, I mean—becauſe they have got a little money——

Mid. True, ſir, but the carriage waits.

Baſh. *(To Major)* As I obſerved, Dagger—becauſe they have got a little money——

Dag. Certainly—but we ſhall be too late.

Baſh. *(To Midday)* They will *correct*—that is, *ſpoil* our compoſitions.

Mid. Juſt ſo—Come, Dagger.

Baſh. Well, I'll finiſh my remarks on our way to the theatricals.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—SIR TIBBULT'S *private room, hung round with the various appurtenances to a theatre.* SIR TIBBULT *dreſſing for the repreſentation*—MRS. DOROTHY TRUNCHEON *attending him.*

Mrs. Dor. Don't tell me, brother, but let me tell you—that I have acted long enough on the public ſtage of life to be a judge of propriety—and I will maintain, that it is unnatural and abſurd, for a man of your age and figure, to attempt the character of a lover.

Sir

Sir Tib. Siſter Dorothy, how ſhould you be a judge of the qualities neceſſary for a lover?—Beſides, I'm aſſured that a man of *ſixty, now a days,* is better qualified to make love, than moſt of our *beaux* of *ſixteen*;—and as to my figure—Garrick was a little man—but could ſeem ſix foot when he was inſpired—and why ſhouldn't I?

Mrs. Dor. Pſhaw! Stuff! Nonſenſe! Becauſe it is *your* theatre, you are reſolved to play the *principal* character—whether it be ſuited to your abilities or *not.*

Sir Tib. Dorothy, you'll put me out of all patience!

Mrs. Dor. Brother, I *will* ſpeak—I *will* be heard.

Sir Tib. Yes, yes, that you *will.* I wiſh the *rights of woman* could be aſcertained!—But I fear no levelling principle could abridge that vaſt prerogative of ſpeech, ſo *peculiar* to *your ſex,* and ſo *over* and *above peculiar* to *yourſelf.*

Mrs. Dor. Now, you talk of *ſpeaking,* you had much better attend to your duty as a *ſenator*—and if you muſt *recite other* people's performances, *ſpout* 'em *there*—you would then ſpeak to *ſome purpoſe.*

Sir Tib. Yes, *we all talk for ſome purpoſe there*—Well, and the Grecian ſenate judged the theatre worthy of its care—and if every man of abilities in *dramatic* poetry, was forbid meddling with *politics,* we might ſtill boaſt our *Vanbrughs* and our *Congreves*—but every thing changes with time.

Mrs. Dor. Methinks, every thing is undergoing a *revolution!* Our *tragedies* are become *pantomimes*

pantomimes—our *pantomimes comedies*—and our *comedies tragedies*.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Epic, and a gentleman, are juſt arrived, ſir, and wait your permiſſion to ſee you.

Sir Tib. O! ſhew them up—Now, ſiſter, here's a man to your liking, the poet, Mr. Epic.

Mrs. Dor. He *is* a favourite of mine—for he is a very *entertaining* author!

Sir Tib. Rather ſay, an *affecting* one—for he *pens* nothing but *tragedies*.

Mrs. Dor. And *they* are the only *performances* we can *laugh* at, now a-days. But here come your literary friends, ſo I'll ev'n leave you—for ſince I *cannot* admire *their abilities*, I ſhall only ſubmit myſelf to their impertinent remarks, and ſarcaſtic reflections.

[*Exit.*

Enter EPIC *and* SNARL.

Epic. I have taken the liberty, Sir Tibbult, of bringing my friend, Mr. Snarl—he has a great genius for theatricals—and, in caſe of neceſſity, can play *any part* you'll put him to—(*aſide to Sir Tib.*)—Mind his *brown bob* and *ſpectacles*—he's a *critic* of the firſt ſtamp.

Sir Tib. Are you ſure of that?

Epic. You'll not doubt it—*He's free of the public theatres—has a ſhare in a news-paper—bows to ſome of our firſt characters—can drink you dead at a ſitting—roar an obſcene ſong*—and in judgment, cenſures *all* pieces that meet with *public* approbation!

Sir

Sir Tib. Then he *muſt* be *clever*, indeed.—Mr. Snarl, I am much honoured in your acquaintance—but, I fear, to a man of your nice diſcernment, that our entertainment to-night will prove rather diſguſting.

Snarl. O, pardon me, good ſir—though I am honoured with the title of a refined critic; yet, when a *friend*'s efforts are concerned, the ſeverity of criticiſm relaxes into the enthuſiaſtic zeal of generous approbation.

Sir Tib. How noble!

Epic. How *natural!*

Snarl. Except, indeed, in the elegant productions of my friend, Mr. Epic—and *there* I take peculiar pleaſure in pointing out the *inſpired beauties* of his poetical imagination.

Sir Tib. And *where you can*, it is but *juſtice* to do it—ſince you inform the audience, while you benefit the author.

Epic. (*Aſide to Snarl*). Have you nothing to fling in for me?

Snarl. (*Aſide to Sir Tib.*). Mr. Epic is a wonderful man!—has but few equals—can make you langh and cry in the ſame line! Wonderful flights!—He only wants a *ſomething* to make his genius known, to fix him a ſecond Shakeſpeare.

Epic. (*Aſide to Sir Tib.*) For a modern critic he is tolerably *ſincere*—and he is not only *ſo himſelf*, but admires it in *others*;—for, whenever he is ſevere with *me*, *I* always point out to him the *error* of his *judgment*.—He *dines* with me *three or four times* a week—and conſequently, I have a *good* opportunity of ſpeaking my mind.

Enter

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Your preſence, Sir Tibbult, is required to ſettle an unhappy diſpute between our young ladies—their dreſſes are juſt arrived from London, and neither will be content, but is deſirous of each other's—

Sir Tib. You'll excuſe me, Gentlemen,—ſince I have undertaken the management of this Corps Dramatique I muſt not let *private pleaſures*, interrupt my *public duties*. [*Exit.*

Epic. A good kind of man that.

Snarl. Rather weak, or ſo.

Epic. True.—Did you mind? he never *once* ſpoke in *praiſe of Tragedy*. He does not love Tragedy, that ſhews the man.

Snarl. I can't ſay I was *attentive to that*—but he is certainly no Solomon—though, *perhaps it ſtruck you*—he never once aſked my opinion about a dramatic author.

Epic. No, I can't ſay *that did ſtrike me*,—but, in a word, Snarl, he has got what we have not.—

Snarl. Money!

Epic. The fame!

Baſhful. (from within) I require no announcing, I can introduce myſelf.——Sir Tibbult, I am——Gentlemen, I beg pardon, I underſtood that Sir Tibbult was here.

Epic. He has juſt retired, ſir.

Baſh. No ceremony, I beg Gentlemen; I pray you to be ſeated.

Snarl. (Aſide.) Who the devil is this fellow?

Epic. (Aſide.) Some *actor* I ſhould think, from his freedom of manner.

Snarl.

Snarl. (Aſide.) He moves as if he had been bred in ſome *public*-houſe.

Baſh. I preſume, Gentlemen, that Sir Tibbult's theatricals have brought you here—I admire your taſte.—The theatre unites in itſelf every ſpecies of amuſement—the rake and moraliſt will each find there his contraſted taſte fully ſatisfied. In a word, ſir, I live by the theatre, or, more properly ſpeaking, the theatre lives by me—and I cannot therefore help appearing zealous in its cauſe.

Epic. (Aſide.) As I preſumed—*an actor.* Your ſeeming rather ſkilled in dramatic affairs, ſir, inclines me to aſk who is the author of the piece to be rehearſed to-night?—

Baſh. What! *not know that!!!*

Epic. Not I, upon my ſoul!

Baſh. Nor you, ſir?

Snarl. How ſhould I ſir! I ſuppoſe the man *never wrote before,* otherwiſe he had been an acquaintance of mine.

Baſh. Nay, Gentlemen, you muſt have known, that a Mr. Baſhful was the author.

Epic. Baſhful! Baſhful!—I never recollect to have heard of that name, Baſhful!

Baſh. I am ſurpriſed indeed.—I muſt impute *your ignorance* entirely to *his own* modeſty.

Snarl. Baſhful—Egad, I remember ſome time paſt, that a piece was condemned which I think was given to a Mr. Baſhful—but the fellow has had *modeſty* enough never to appear in *public* again.

Baſh. The—the—ve--ry ſame—ſir!—I have—heard him mention that event himſelf--ve--ve--ry often—Yet, ſir, from his own account—and he

he is judged to be a very *modeſt impartial kind of a man*;—yet, I ſay—from *Mr. Baſhful's own* account—it was not ſo—ſo—very—very bad as to juſtify ſuch a reception. *(Aſide.)* O that I had been announced, I had ſaved myſelf all this anxiety!

Epic. (Half apart to Baſhful.) Nay, ſir, you cannot doubt Mr. *Snarl's* opinion—he is a little *verſed* in *dramatic* criticiſm, though perhaps, he is no *great actor!*—*(Aſide.) Forcible* enough.

Snarl. Candidly, ſir, I muſt declare, though you had written it yourſelf, that it was as bad a *comedy* as ever I wiſhed to doze over!—

Baſh. There—there—Damn me if I think ſo.

Epic. O, it was a *comedy!*—ha! a comedy!—*that* was enough to damn it alone—a *comedy!* ha! ha!—

Baſh. My dear ſir, it was juſt ſo—its being a *comedy* alone *damn'd* it—all the world was then fooliſh, actually mad, running after nothing but *tragedies* and ſuch ſtuff—

Epic. (*Self-ſufficiently.*) Snarl! mind that—Tragedy, ſtuff!—I ſhall laugh in the puppy's face.—I am ſorry, ſir, that you ſhould expoſe yourſelf ſo much; for tho' your having *acted* in your *friend's* comedy may provoke *ſome* warmth in his favour, yet you ſhould not impeach your ſenſe ſo *ſtrongly* as to cenſure the very firſt ſtyle of writing.

Baſh. (Contemptuouſly.) The world, ſir, thinks ſo with me—and if the ſtage is the mirror of nature, where the devil can you find ſuch characters as our modern tragedies exhibit?—I ſpeak, upon my honour, *impartially.*

Epic. So do I—for to be ſure, the *low* ſpirit of life exiſts only in our *comedies*, whoſe authors

thors greateſt pride *is* to *expoſe* the follies of their *friends*—

Baſh. And the very *beſt* of our *buſkin'd* ſcribblers can but *expoſe themſelves.*

Epic. Damn it, there's no talking to an actor.

Baſh. An actor!! Call me an actor!!

Snarl. Yes, ſir, an actor—*a ſtroller on boards—a plank ſcraper*—a *grinning mountebank*—a *ſpeaking puppet*, that not only frets himſelf, but his audience too—a——

Baſh. "*I'll hear no more—die prophet in* thy ſpeech!"—*(collars him)* Thou abuſive villain, I could almoſt "*tear thee limb from limb, and ſtrew the hungry churchyard with thy bones.*"

Epic. O *that's* enough—we ſee plainly *now* that you are *no actor.*

Baſh. What! diſpute my judgment!!

[*Collars him.*

Enters Sir TIBBULT.

Sir Tib. Heyday! what is the matter? Is *Comedy* going to *murder Tragedy*, and *Criticiſm* ſtand *quietly* by?—for ſhame, Gentlemen, what would Shakeſpeare and Congreve have ſaid, if they had been living?

Baſh. To call me an actor! Damn me if I was ever ſo abus'd in all my life!

Sir Tib. How is this Mr. Snarl?

Snarl. Indeed, ſir, *I* cannot *unravel* it.

Sir Tib. Then it muſt be *bad* indeed—ſince *tragedy* and *comedy* are ſo *confuſedly* united, that even the efforts of *criticiſm* cannot ſeparate them—Nay, let me entreat you to be friends. Mr. Baſhful, Mr. Epic—come, unite in friendſhip—and, ſince you are both excellent in your line,

laugh

laugh not at each other, and you may both be happy.

Epic. Unite in friendſhip! *with all my ſoul!*

Baſh. And I too, *moſt ſincerely.*

[*They both ſhake hands with much cordiality.*

Epic. (*Aſide*). May I periſh, but I'll be revenged—*a comic buffoon!*

Baſh. (*Aſide*). Damn me, if I ever forgive him!—*a buſkin'd butcher!*

Sir Tib. The performers, Mr. Baſhful, are all ready—You and Mr. Epic will go firſt—for, while *Melpomene and Thalia go hand in hand,* CRITICISM, Mr. Snarl, will ſoon be *left behind.*

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I——BASHFUL *enters as before the Curtain.*

Baſh. Ladies and gentlemen, I feel it incumbent on me as a duty due to you, to aſſure you, that you have undergone a thorough change ſince your entry into this houſe. The opening of this *ſecond* act will convert you from a *public* to a *private* theatre. May it alſo convert your ſeelings—and, inſtead of ſpeaking from the *honeſty* of your *ſouls*, as every *public audience ought*, *may* you be partially inclined to *give approbation* even to the impeachment of your *ſenſe*, as every *private audience does*. I ſhall not particularize the numerous editors—for, give their opinions they will at the riſk of all reputation!—Yet, if they would be advis'd by me, the ſeverity of criticiſm would melt into the ſoft breathing of applauſe, ſince this exhibition being conſidered a *private* one, if they *approve* their *judgment* muſt be *ſuſpected*; if they *condemn*, their *generoſity* will be *reflected upon*.—The performers require much partial attention—they labour as *novices* under many *imperfections*—they know not yet how to *provoke a laugh* by *ſtudied grimace*, or catch at *applauſe* by *inſertions* of their *own*. As to the comedy, it muſt live as moſt modern comedies do—by its *meritorious* variety!! Its *ſcenery*

nery is *beautiful*—its *dreſſes* are *elegant*—its *ſentiment abundant*—and its muſic—*pretty*. As to its *wit* or *humour*—I declare it, upon my honour, to be as *ſcarce* as any that can be found in our *modern productions*.—With ſuch *titles* to your *approbation*, may I hope for ſucceſs?—And confiding in your kindneſs, may I venture to draw the curtain from before our efforts, and expoſe them to your criticiſm!

Enter PROMPTER.

Promp. The prologue, ſir, is ready dreſs'd, and waits your pleaſure.

Baſh. The prologue! pſhaw! I didn't intend to have exhibited him to-night—but as I didn't write it myſelf, it may be judged illiberal in me to refuſe his entry—ſo, let's ſee. *(Reads).*——

Enter the PROLOGUE, *in deep Mourning.*

Baſh. (Bowing). You'll turn your face to the audience, if you pleaſe, ſir.—I hope, ſir, you don't intend to tell the audience the plot of my comedy!

Pro. No, ſir—I have very little concern ever with the pieces I precede, as to the *matter* of them. It is my duty to aſſure the audience, in ſome pretty *metaphor* or another, that like a *tender bark*, or ſome ſuch thing, you have ventured into the tempeſtuous ocean of criticiſm; and that unleſs they *(the audience)* blow a favourable gale, or ſo forth, that in the courſe of *common juſtice* your little piece, like all *modern* comedies, muſt *ſplit* on the rock of their *judgment*, and *ſo forth*.

Baſh. That is your way, is it?

Pro. But I'm going to try a novel ſtyle to-night—as thus: *(To the audience.)*

" Prologues are, now-a-days, a mere excuſe,
" Sent to the audience by the *comic muſe*,
" To tell them 'fore the comedies begin,
" That *ſhe* has *nought at all* to do therein;
" Therefore, to raiſe the *tear* of *ſocial grief*,
" And give the *tear* of *laughter* ſome relief—
" To night our comedy will nobly ſtrive,
" To keep your tender feelings all alive!
" With *dreſſes*, *ſcenery*, *battles*, and with *ſong*,
" (Such as to modern comedy belong);
" Though Shakeſpeare, Jonſon, Congreve,
" and ſuch men,
" Gave humour to their comedies! what then?
" Altho' they try'd their audience to provoke,
" To cry with laughter—and expire with joke,
" Yet ſhall we authors, *more refin'd*, ſubmit,
" To ſtuff our *comedies* with *mirth* and *wit!*
" No—Heav'n forbid! that we, who *judge* ſo
" well,
" Should ſtoop to *copy* where we *can't excel.*"

Baſh. But don't you mean to introduce ridiculous jokes *about crops—city dames—turtle feaſts*—and *ſo forth?*

Pro. O dear, no ſir—We leave them always for the *Epilogue*.

Bash. Aye—but as I don't mean to treat with an epilogue, I muſt beg that you will *defer* the prologue till ſuch times that you have *inſerted ſuch* catch-claps, as inſure the ſucceſs of our epilogues. [*Exit the Prologue.*

Now, Mr. Prompter, if you pleaſe.

[*The*

[*The Curtain riſes.—In the fore-ground, Battlements mounted with Cannon—Soldiers ranged in order of Battle before them—In the back-ground, a diſtant Encampment—On the left ſide of the Stage is ſeated* Mrs. Dorothy Truncheon, *between* Major Dagger *and* Mr. Midday—Epic *and* Snarl *advance towards* Baſhful.]

Snarl. A very fine opening, Mr. Baſhful, indeed.

Bash. (To the ſoldiers). Stand a little back, gentlemen, that the *whole theatre* may *take a peep*.—I have known the effect of a beautiful ſcene deſtroyed, merely by a ſet of broad-ſhouldered fellows interrupting the view—Now, ſirs, you may proceed.

Soldiers (in full chorus).

"Shall we attack, or ſhall we not?"

Snarl. One moment wait, if you pleaſe—Pray, Mr. Baſhful, what may be the uſe of theſe *direction poſts* in the *front* of the *ſcene*?

Bash. Can't you read, ſir?

Snarl. (Reading). The firſt poſt ſays—"*This ſcene is ſuppoſed to be in Italy*"—and the ſecond, "*Theſe battlements ſurround the town of the Sabines—and the diſtant camp belongs to the Romans.*"

Bash. That idea is perfectly new! Is it natural to ſuppoſe, becauſe authors have *claſſical* knowledge, that the audience ſhould too? I therefore deviſed *this* ſcheme, to inform them where they are, and what ſort of people they have to deal with.

Epic. And very much they ought to feel themſelves obliged to you—but is it not out of character to exhibit *cannon?* The *age* of the *Sabines* was many *hundred* years before they were invented!

Bash. No—I introduce cannon to *give fire to the ſcene.* I make but *very little uſe* of them—beſides, I have a *precedent* in *Shakeſpeare,* who has done the ſame thing.—Now, gentlemen, ſtrike up again.

Chorus of Soldiers.

" Shall we attack, or ſhall we not?
" What wait we for?

Firſt Officer.

The law!
" For dare we fight, howe'er elate,
" With hopes that we'll ſucceed!
" Without an *acting magiſtrate*
" To *juſtify* the deed?"

Bash. You find, ſirs, that I juſtify our laws, by drawing a pecedent from ancient times *(reads)*—

For dare we fight, howe'er elate with hopes that we'll ſuccceed,
Without an acting magiſtrate to juſtify the deed!

I make the ſoldiers actually go to the walls of the enemy, and fear to attack, becauſe the *high conſtable,* who ſhould accompany them, is out of the way.

[*The approach of the General is ſounded.*

Enter

Enter MARCUS.

Mar. "Give me your hand, thou moſt noble "youth—having advanced to the very gates, "why delay we thus to open them?"

Officer. (Whiſpers).

Mar. "A *fig* for the *law*—we muſt go then "*without the law*—and I have no doubt but it will ſoon *overtake us!*"

Snarl. Nor I, i'faith.

[*A parley ſounded from the top of the battlements.*

Mar. "Ha! this ſound ſounds well—a *parley!* "Speak *not*, for ſee the king appears—O! my "prophetic ſoul!—a *ſomething* ſpeaks within my "breaſt, that tells me, we would gladly anſwer "our wiſhes, without the riſk of life."

Snarl. That *ſomething*, I preſume, is *cowardice.*

Bash. Huſh!

Tatius. (From the top of the battlements). "Moſt "courageous ſtrangers!—Why, with this hoſtile "daring have ye thus encompaſs'd us in our "walls?—In what have we ſtirred ye to war "againſt us? Anſwer, and I have no doubt "but that we can *compromiſe* the matter to our "mutual ſatisfaction."

Dag. One would ſuppoſe *he* was *high conſtable!*

Snarl. From his offering to *compromiſe* the matter, it looks like it.

Officer. "He offers well! Shall we take him at "his word?"

Mar. "Can you heſitate? Moſt noble Tatius, "if you will but ſtep down, my word is paſſed "that every grievance ſhall be ſettled; or my "inſpiring zeal to fix in friendſhip ſhall bear me "to the *higheſt* of your battlements, and ſettle "it alone."

Snarl. That's an amazing *ſtretch*, indeed.

Tat. "*We* will dare approach you."

[*They retire amidſt muſic.*

Mar. "Heavens! the *nobleſt* courage wears "but a lowering look, unleſs *brightened* by the "*beam* of humanity!"

Bash. Good God! *Nobody* claps!—Now, on the *public* ſtage, that *ſingle* ſpeech muſt have inſured a *general* one.

Snarl. Pray, Mr. Epic, don't you think the language too *poetical* for comedy?

Epic. It is rather out of the *common track* of writing.

Bash. It *is* very *poetical* I'll allow—but if you expoſe your *characters* of the drama to the dangers of *war*, it matters *little*, whether it is in *comedy* or *tragedy*—They muſt *ſpeak* like *heroes*—But hark! the King approaches!

Enter TATIUS, *leading* HERSILIA, *his daughter—attended by a very ſplendid ſhew of Courtiers, &c.*

Tat. "Relying on the honour of your word, "which, conſidering that we know *nothing* of "you, proves the *force* of our *confidence*—we "boldly advance—Our *perſon* attended by our "daughter, to appeaſe this ſeeming itch for war "in you—not content with taking unto your-"ſelves, and *with French leave too*——"

Snarl. I beg your majeſty's pardon—But, is it not improper to put the *Engliſh idiom* into the mouth of a *king*, who, if he *ever* exiſted, muſt have *reigned* ſo many centuries before we had any *language* at all?

Baſh.

Bash. No, ſir, it is very allowable, nay, even neceſſary—for if every character was to ſpeak the idiom of its own nation, who the devil could ſee the wit of it?—So proceed ſir—You left off "*and with French leave too.*"

Tat. "Not content with taking unto your-"ſelves, and with French leave too, this ſpace of "Italian ground; you greedily approach our "territories, terrifying our ſubjects and ourſelves "—Why have ye done ſo?"

Mar. "In the name of Romulus, my lord "and maſter, I now ſpeak—The kingdom we "are now eſtabliſhing, and which I *foretel* will "reign the *monarch kingdom of the world*—"

Epic. A ſecond Virgil!—"*Si qua fata aſpera rumpas, tu Marcellus eris.*"

Mar. "The kingdom we are now eſtabliſhing "is *ſhort of women—Woman*, lovely woman, from "whom nations upon nations have ſprung, is "the provocative to this hoſtile appearance. "Sow but the ſeed of intercourſe between us, "and we will clothe this our *brandiſhed armour* "in the *ſoft garment* of all-ſmiling friendſhip.—"The tented field ſhall turn into the bride-"groom's chamber—and the loud trumpet, ket-"tle drum, and every other drum, ſhall ſink "their hoarſer breath into the ſoft ſounds of "matrimonial ecſtacy."

Tat. "There ſpoke the *ſoldier, muſician, lover* "and *politician!* I accept your terms—and to "prove how much I take to heart your cauſe—"Herſilia, my much loved child—my duteous "child, ſhall ſet the firſt example.—*Romulus*, ſhe "is thine.

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Bash.

Baſh. When you ſpeak of any one with *affection*, you ſhould always look *round the houſe*—it produces a ſympathy of feeling!

Snarl. There is a little impropriety, Mr. Marcus, which for want of the *knowledge* of *ſtage effect*, you are guilty of:—Whilſt Tatius is addreſſing you, you ſeem as attentive to him, as though you were in *real* converſation with him;—but that is wrong on the ſtage:—Now-a-days, when any character is addreſſing you, keep your eyes ever *on the boxes*—it gives a *freedom* of manner, which only *ſuperiors* dare affect.

Her. "O! my moſt noble and illuſtrious pa-
"rent—can high nobility ſo far outſtretch the
"limits of humble life, as to juſtify a breach of
"faith like thine?"

Baſh. Mind, gentlemen, how this ſpeech improves upon ye!

Snarl. It *ought*—there's *great room* for it.

Her. "Was it to merit ſuch a breach of faith,
"that bold Sulphurius *(O my much loved youth)*
"drove the proud helmet-nodding enemy even
"from *your palace gates?*"

Mid. The lady *ſtrikes home* i'faith.

Her. "Was it to merit ſuch a breach of
"faith——"

Tat. "I'll hear no more."

Her. "Nay, then I *muſt* be heard."

Baſh. True to *her ſex*, you ſee—ſhe will have the *laſt word*.

Her. "My tender parent, hear me.—I'll call
"thee father, king, monarch—O thou great Sa-
"bine prince, attend a daughter's prayer!"

Epic. That's ſpirited.

Snarl.

Snarl. And ſo *cloſe* upon *Shakeſpeare*, that one might have ſworn he had written it.

Her. "If, then, I cannot gain upon you in "*proſaic prayer*—I'll try even *muſic*.

Baſh. Whenever your hero or heroine has nothing to ſay, give him a ſong—any nonſenſe may be ſet to muſic.

AIR—HERSILIA.

With broken heart, and much ſubmiſſion,
Your daughter offers her petition;
Recal your word, your word ſo cruel,
And pity, Oh! Herſilia's fate!
I'd rather live with you on *gruel*,
Than *wine* within another ſtate.
Attend my pray'r, my pray'r diſtreſſing,
And ev'ry night I'll pray your bleſſing.

Tat. "*Patriots* will not be moved by *muſic*—"Herſilia, we muſt part. Fifes, drums, and "trumpets, do your duty—Herſilia is now given "to Romulus—commend our perſon to him."

[*Flouriſh of muſic*—Marcus, *kneeling, takes* Herſilia's *hand, and leads her off* IN TEARS—Tatius *retires in a ſlow march.*

Dag. His majeſty is a little abrupt, I think!

Mrs. Trunch. Indecently ſo—not allowing her to wait even for the wedding cloathes!

Baſh. That is what we call *ſtage effect*—But, now, gentlemen, I am entering into the more *domeſtic*, and conſequently more *witty* ſcenes—*(Reads)* "*Scene the ſecond—the inſide of Sulphurius's houſe—Enter Sulphurius, red hot with paſſion.*"

Epic.

Epic. Sulphurius! his very *name* beſpeaks him a *hot* fellow.

Baſh. 'Tis the cuſtom of the ſtage to deſcribe by the *name*, the *virtues* or *failings* of the *character*.

Snarl. And it is fit it ſhould be ſo—as the only means left for the audience to diſtinguiſh one character from the other.

Baſh. True—You muſt know, this Sulphurius is General of Tatius's forces, and violently in love with Herſilia, whoſe hand he has been promiſed for his ſervices; and having heard of all that Tatius has juſt done, is reſolved to do a deed of daring, and reſcue his fair miſtreſs.—Therefore, enter Sulphurius *red hot* with paſſion.

Snarl. But is it not rather improbable, that the news of the king's determination ſhould have ſo ſoon reached the ears of this commander in chief?

Baſh. In the *common* event of things, it may be ſo—but, if the audience were always to wait whilſt a *probable time* elapſed between *dramatic facts taking place*, they might ſtay the *whole night* and not ſee *one* act out—*News*, in the *drama*, travels as quick as *ſcandal* in a *country* town—therefore, enter Sulphurius, red hot with paſſion.—What can detain Sulphurius?

Dag. He is *waiting* for the *news* to *put him in a paſſion*.

Baſh. (Apart). Sir *Tibbult* plays the character—he is *principal* actor, you know, and will take liberties.

Enter SULPHURIUS.

Sul. "Hey! how! what! why! and where-
"fore! Shall I, who have overthrown *armies*,
ſtumble

" ſtumble o'er an act like this? Shall I, who
" have led captives to the amount of thouſands,
" bend to a ſingle man! No, thank Heaven, I
" have a daring ſpirit—that ſhrinks like the *ſen-*
" *ſitive plant*, at the touch of inſult!" [*Muſes.*

Baſh. Now for a ſhew of wit—now for the ſpirit of raillery!—I beg you will be attentive—
—Here comes the character my comedy depends upon for its *humour*—" Enter the *Fool*"
—Ever put all your *wit* in the mouth of a fool—any nonſenſe may be termed wit in the mouth of a fool.

Mid. True—for if he be a witty fool, then is the author complimented. And if he be but a fooliſh wit, then does the fool bear it all himſelf.

[*During this ſcene* Baſhful *by dumb ſhew expreſſes his approbation of the various turns of the* Fool.]

Enter Fool.

Fool. " Ha! Sulphurius!—By the fire of
" his *eye* he ſhould be in a paſſion—unleſs it
" be *all my eye*, then do I not ſee well."

Snarl. Egad, the Fool is free and eaſy.

Baſh. Sir, *impertinent familiarity* proves the Fool.

Snarl. *I* have done.

Sul. (*In a very low voice*). " But how to reme-
" dy this misfortune?"

Baſh. O, ſir, you muſt ſpeak louder than that.

Sul. I thought the Fool was not to hear me.

Baſh. Who the devil told you the Fool was upon the ſtage? Beſides, ſir, have not you remarked,

marked, that upon every ſtage, when actors whiſper *ſecrets* not to be *overheard* by any other character preſent, that they always ſpeak *louder* than at any other time?

Sul. "But how to remedy this misfortune?—"Shall I declare my wrongs to my noble follow-"ers, and ſeize *vi et armis* this fair captive?"

Mid. Vi et armis ſounds pedantic.

Baſh. Heavens, ſir! are we not in Italy? And ſure it is *natural* to *quote* from *Latin* authors.

Sul. "Or ſhall I firſt take counſel of my friends! "*(ſeeing the Fool)* Ah! what my old counſellor "the Fool—thou art luckily met. Now, indeed, "you're my friend——

Baſh. I take that hint from "*A friend in need is a friend indeed!*"

Sul. "I am diſtracted!"

Fool. "What is your *complaint?*"

Baſh. Now mind the turn.

"*Sul.* "My *complaint* is *ſlighted* love."

Fool. "That is but a *ſlight complaint.*"

Baſh. Deviliſh neat; but you muſt ſay that with a *grave* face, not with a *ſmile*—one would ſuppoſe you had been bred upon the *public* ſtage, to ſee you *laugh* thus at *yourſelf.*

Fool. "Now, were I tortured by neglected "love, I ſhould expect myſelf to *ſmile.*"

Sul. "Why, Fool?"

Fool. "Becauſe it would ſeem *peculiar*;—as "thus—to be *neglected* is to be *alone*—good;—"to be *alone* is to be *ſingular*—better;—and to "be *ſingular* is to be *particular*—beſt. *Therefore* "would I *ſmile* in the *torture* of my love."

Sul. "Thou art a wiſe Fool."

Baſh.

Baſh. I make Sulphurius thus frequently repeat the word *Fool*, leſt the audience, from his *redundancy of wit*, ſhould *forget* he was one.

Snarl. There was *no* occaſion for that—his *very wit* beſpeaks him *a Fool.*

Sul. "I tell thee what, Fool—I'll hie me to "the camp of Romulus, and there *in perſon* aſk "her back again."

Fool. "That will ſeem *too perſonal*—No, you "ſhall charm her back again, like a *ſecond Or-* "*pheus.* I have the diſguiſe of a minſtrel—thou "canſt ſing;—but if thou canſt not ſing, thou "canſt play—and if thou canſt not play, thou "canſt *profeſs* thyſelf *able* ſo to do—which will "make thee an *able profeſſor* of ſuch accompliſh- "ments, at leaſt."

Dag. The Fool *thous* it ſo much, one might ſuſpect him a *Quaker.*

Sul. "Then it is reſolved upon—Come, thou "dear counſellor—we will prepare ourſelves for "the undertaking."

[*Exeunt abruptly.*

Baſh. I ſend them off thus *quickly*, leſt they ſhould alter their determination—You, perhaps, did not think it poſſible for me to introduce ſo much *wit* in a ſcene ſo *ſeriouſly* began—but in ſpite of my modeſty, I muſt own, that the ſtrokes were pretty frequent—*quick* as *lightening!*

Dag. Yes, egad, ſo *very quick*, that one can *ſcarce* be ſaid to have *ſeen* them!

Mrs. Trun. But *punning*, Mr. Baſhful, at beſt, is but a BASTARD *wit.*

Baſh. And, therefore, *madam*, is a NATURAL *wit.*—(*Reads*). "*Scene the third, the inſide of Romu-* "*lus's tent—Herſilia kneeling at the bottom of the throne*

" *throne in tears—Romulus with triumphant ſtare*
" *ſtanding at the top, offering her his hand—the ſur-*
" *rounding ſoldiers leaning upon their arms, with fixed*
" *looks on Herſilia, ſeemingly pitiful.*"——There, gentlemen, there's an expreſſive ſcene.

Snarl. Mrs. Wright could not have moulded one more *unnaturally natural.*

Baſh. There's an effect!—I *may praiſe*, ſince it is not *my own thought.* I took it from a pantomime of enchantment abroad—I make my characters only *look* their thoughts—for, ſince the audience well know, that Herſilia cannot love Romulus, and that Romulus muſt be deſirous of having her, their mutual vows and declarations would ſeem tedious—ſo I e'en make them *look* their thoughts—Now, hark! the charm breaks.

[*Sprightly muſic without.*

Rom. " What ſounds are they that vibrate on
" my ear,
" And ſeem to ſpeak feſtivity ſo near?
" Who waits without? How dares this feſtive
" ſound
" Approach our preſence, and our ſilence wound!
" Fly and ſecure the wretch thus acting ill,
" And make he, ſhe, or they, attend our will!"

Epic. But why particularize this gentleman's ſpeech with poetry?

Baſh. Becauſe I have introduced *two* kings—and as I have beſtowed the moſt *elegant proſe* upon the *one*, and thus diſtinguiſhed him from the reſt of his people, I thought it was but juſtice to give *ſomething* equally *ſtriking* in the *other.*

Her. " O! my prophetic ſoul! the ſound in-
" ſpires me—it ſpeaks comfort to my ſoul. My
" lord—muſic is the food of love, yet do you
" ſeem diſguſted with it."

Baſh.

Baſh. There, you ſee Herſilia *naturally* gueſſes that it is her *lover coming* in diſguiſe to relieve her.

Snarl. An *aſtoniſhing clever young lady!*

Rom. " Herſilia, give but Romulus thy love,
" And Romulus of nought ſhall diſapprove;
" But firſt, dear angel, for ſo *great a queen*
" Muſt not by *common ſtragglers* here be ſeen,
" Thy glorious ſelf behind this ſcreen I'll place,
" To hide thy body, and conceal thy face."

Enter SULPHURIUS *diſguiſed as a Minſtrel, and the* FOOL *as a Fortune-teller, guarded by Soldiers.*

Rom. " Were theſe the youths, that dar'd ſo
" ſprightly ſing
" Within the aweful hearing of a king?
" And when they knew that ſuch a *lively* ſtrain,
" Could but ill ſuit our *melancholy* vein!"

Firſt Officer. " They were, my lord."

Rom. " Who bade thee ſpeak, thou moſt
" officious elf?—
" I'll have each culprit anſwer for himſelf."

Fool. " That we did ſing, my lord, *'tis true*—
" and pity to us, indeed, that it is true."

Sul. (To himſelf). " Where can the fair Her-
" ſilia be ſecreted?—*Theſe ſounds* muſt ſure diſ-
' cover,'"

Baſh. Whenever a lover *loſes* his miſtreſs on the mimic ſtage, he has recourſe to a *ſong*, which *ſeldom fails to find her.*

SOFT AIR—SULPHURIUS.

Where can thoſe eyes ſecreted be,
Whoſe light, O ſun! would rival thee?
What abyſs can ſo veil their ſight,
As not to make the day ſeem night?

HERSILIA *(anſwers)*.

As the ſun through April ſhowers,
My eyes thro' tears encreaſe their powers;
But if they here much longer ſtay,
Their ſplendor ſoon muſt die away.

Snarl. What a lucky hit of Sulphurius! to touch upon a *ſong*, which *ſhe* could *anſwer* both by *words* and *muſic*.

Rom. "That muſic ſurely lovers may ap-
"prove,
"Whoſe every ſound's an orator for love.
"Approach, Herſilia, ere theſe ſounds can *die*,
"That we may *live* in richeſt harmony."

[Herſilia *appears*—Sulplurius *ſeems* NOT *aſtoniſhed*.

Baſh. Moſt writers would have made Sulphurius ſtart at ſeeing his miſtreſs—but I make him act with more policy.

Rom. "Moſt precious youth, that doſt a *beg-*
"*gar* ſeem,
"And yet, is *worthy* of a *king's* eſteem—
"Approach, and give, O youth, in ſhort rela-
"tion,
"Thy birth, thy parentage, and education!

SONG

SONG—SULPHURIUS.

A poor minſtrel I am, that deals in ſublime,
  Howe'er I may humble appear;
And, if I *ſucceed*, muſt get riches *in time*,
  So egad, I have nothing to fear.

To be ſure I have choſen a wonderful choice,
  But very well, as the times go;
For though *out of place*, I ſtill live by my *voice*,
  Without ſaying ev'n *yes* or *no*.

There, ſir, is a ballad, that muſt entertain,
  And all your love's doubtings deſtroy—
And *one* for you, *madam*, to eaſe all your pain,
  And change ſad forbodings for joy.

Baſh. This mode of diſcovering himſelf to Herfilia by a *ballad*, is perfectly new—and to prevent Romulus from obſerving her joy on the diſcovery, I have adopted this ſcheme.

Fool. (Leads the Prince forward).

SONG—FOOL.

A fortune-teller, ſir, am I,
  And for your ſake am come;
Your ear, great prince, do not deny,
  I've *news* to ſtrike thee *dumb*.

Snarl. News to ſtrike him dumb!—a very *great inducement* for the Prince to *liſten* to him!

Rom. " Speak freely, youth, and freely I'll
" attend,
" And thank thee much, too, if thou prov'ſt my
" friend."

[*As* Romulus *approaches the* Fool, Sulphurius *and* Herſilia *meet—Much dumb ſhew of joy between them—after which they ſteal away.*]

Fool. " What I have to relate, relates to thy-
" ſelf.—You have heard of Sulphurius, the Sa-
" bine general?"

Rom. " I know Sulphurius is the general's
" name—
" But, Oh! I know him better from his fame."

Baſh. Mind how ſtudiouſly *ſlow* he ſpeaks, to give his friends, the fugitives, time to eſcape—that's *political.*

Snarl. But don't you think the audience would pardon the *want* of *policy* for the *ſake* of *diſpatch?*

Fool. " He is plotting againſt your life!"

Baſh. Too quick by half a minute,——He—is—plotting—againſt—your—life.——— Conſider, ſir, what buſtle and crowds there are *behind* the *ſcenes*—they won't have time to have penetrated half through, at the rate you go.

Fool. " He—is—plotting—a—gainſt—your—life!"

Rom. " Is——he——in—deed?"

Baſh. D—n it, ſir, you are not in the ſecret—you are to talk as naturally quick as ever.——There is no teaching theſe actors. (*Aſide*).

Snarl. Now, i'faith, I think that the *Prince* is as much blinded to their eſcape, as if he had been in the plot too.

Fool.

Fool. "And—is—now—in—diſ—guiſe.

Rom. "Where?"

[*The ſhout of ſoldiers without—claſhing of arms, &c.*

Enter an Officer.

Firſt Off. "She is gone—ſhe is gone—ſhe is "gone."

Enter ſecond Officer.

Sec. Off. "Your ſoldiers are beaten, beaten, "beaten!"

Epic. Fallen—fallen—fallen.——*Dryden* all over!!!

Rom. "Councils of war will needleſs be, I "trow,
"Unleſs I call them for the ſake of ſhew."

Enter MARCUS.

Marcus. "Indeed, my lord, it is too late—"they are gone *too far* to be *overtaken.*"

Rom. "Ah! ſay you ſo—then put our ar-"mour on,
"For to purſue we quickly will be gone;
"Speed we want none—ſince, for Herſilia's ſake,
"My *generous* ſpirit will *not overtake.*

[*Exeunt.*

Baſh. That laſt reſolve proves him of *noble ſentiments.*—(*Reads*) "*Scene the fourth*"——

Snarl. "This is a terrible *long* act, Mr. Baſhful.

Baſh. It won't appear *ſo*, I preſume, when it is *performed*, as it will *then* be *ſhort* of *your* remarks—therefore, with your leave,—(*reads*) "*Scene the fourth—A* SANDY *road by the ſide of a wood, with a natural green bank.*"—You will ſhortly perceive why I particularize a *ſandy* road.

Enter HERSILIA, *leaning on the arm of* SULPHURIUS —*with Soldiers.*

Herſ. " My dear Sulphurius, with fatigue and
" fear
" I'm ſo oppreſs'd, I fain would reſt me here.
" On this green bank, reclining let me ſtay,
" Which nature purpoſely put in my way.

Snarl. I ſuppoſe that the young lady has caught the trick of rhyming from being in Romulus's company. She didn't ſpeak in poetry before ſhe went to him.

Baſh. I allow this is a *poetic* licence. The truth is, this is a *love ſcene*—Now, moſt *lovers* in *comedies* of late, *ſing* their burning wiſhes in a *duet*—but as I hate imitation, I make mine ſpeak theirs in poetry.—Now, Mr. Sulphurius.

Sul. " This ſandy road——

Baſh. That's *my* reaſon for particularizing it in the ſcene.

Sul. " This ſandy road, that has ſo worn out
" thee,
" My dear Herſilia, has fatigued me:
" Thus, like your guardian ſylph, I'll lay me
" down,
" Till we've recover'd ſtrength to get to town.
" And, leſt our guards ſhould, with officious eye,
" O'erlook our conduct, as they're ſtanding by,
" I'll thus remove them, every ſoul and all—
" Though out of ſeeing, yet within our call."

Epic. Hey-day! nothing *naughty*, I hope.

Sul. " And now, Herſilia, all the ſoldiers
" gone,
" And we two loving ſouls are left alone,

" Loſt

" Loſt to the ſplendor of all worldly light,
" Save ſuch as ſhooteth from Herſilia's ſight;
" No atom ſtirring, ſave this golden veſt,
" That falls and riſes with her heaving breaſt!
" Why loſe an opportunity like this,
" And idly paſs, what ſhould be paſs'd in bliſs?"

Baſh. You ſee that he's a true lover—for though he gives his enemies ſuch a fair chance of overtaking him, he never once, before his miſtreſs, hints at the impropriety of ſtopping.

Dag. A *youth of faſhion complete*—that will even riſk his *character*, to attain the *ſummit of his wiſhes*.

Herſ. O brave Sulphurious—brave Sulphu-
" rius, O!
" How canſt thou teaze and vex a maiden ſo?
" Thou know'ſt my paſſion is ſincere and pure,
" And yet, think'ſt not, my virtue is ſecure.
" Yet, yet, I fear—yet, yet, I dearly love—
" Now, now, I favour—and now diſapprove.
" O tempt me not with that ſeducing air,
" *Girls* are made *wretched* only 'cauſe they're fair.

[*Alarum ſounded*—Sulphurius's *ſoldiers driven back upon the ſtage by* Romulus's *party*—Sulphurius *places* Herſilia *behind the bank, and rallies his men*—*A dead ſtand between the two armies, who ſtare at one another till they break forth in this Chorus.*]

CHORUS—SULPHURIUS's *Soldiers.*

" Attack us now, ſirs, if you dare—
" How ye tremble! how ye ſtare!"

CHORUS—Romulus's *Soldiers.*

" If we tremble, 'tis with rage,
" 'Cauſe our general won't engage."

Enter Romulus.

Rom. (To Sulphurius). " Sir, I muſt beg you
" *coolly* to diſarm,
" Or elſe, I ſee this ſkirmiſh will be warm!"
Sul. " Villain, robber, thou lyeſt—I own that
" you have ſurpriz'd me at an *awkward* opportu-
" nity. But *love, honour,* nay even *religion,* bid
me arm—and when I forget *love, honour,*
" and *religion*—may *love, honour,* and *religion*
" forget me!—There now."
Baſh. Bravely done—excellent!
Rom. " If you won't make it up—we muſt, of
" courſe,
" Draw forth our ſwords, and ſettle it by force."
Sul. " Mind, then, we fight for love."
Rom. " We do."

[*They engage very calmly, then retire while their ſoldiers meet, who after ſome little ſtrife draw back to let their Generals engage. After much doubtful battleing,* Herſilia *appears from behind the bank*—Romulus *and his ſoldiers retreat, followed by* Sulphurius, Herſilia, *&c. ſhouting.*—*The curtain drops*—Baſhful, Dagger, Midday, Epic *and* Snarl *advancing before it.*

Baſh. Fine work, Mr. Snarl.
Snarl. Yes, indeed, you have concluded in *perfect confuſion.*

Baſh.

Baſh. Well, gentlemen, what think ye of the *incidents, ſcenery* and *dreſs?*

Mid. There is really more *plot* than in the general run of our comedies.

Baſh. Plot! pſhaw! What think you of the *incidents, ſcenery,* and *dreſs?*

Snarl. The *wit* is not *bad.*

Baſh. Damn the *wit!*—What has that to do with comedies now-a-days. Give your opinion of the *incidents, ſcenery,* and *dreſs?*

Dag. As to the *incidents*—if you call *battles incidents*—I think they are *too numerous.*

Baſh. Too many battles!—Ha! Sir, when you are better acquainted with the taſte of the town, you'll find, that modern authors are obliged to *fight their way through.*—So gentlemen, we'll retire to the green-room, where you will find *cake and wine.*

Snarl. Indeed! What a pity that the audience cannot *taſte* the *principal entertainment this evening.* [*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

BASHFUL, EPIC, SNARL, DAGGER, *and* MIDDAY, *before the Curtain.*

Baſh. You are a very candid man, Mr. Midday, and I refer your opinion to every ſoul's beſides.—And ſo, you really think, that the only fault this private company of performers has, is a ſeeming ignorance of many of the parts I have allotted to them.

Mid. And a very great one—is it not?—For when an actor does not comprehend the meaning of his author, how the devil ſhould the audience?

Dag. And I am now convinced, that 'twas to *their ignorance* I may impute my *not underſtanding* the meaning of the firſt act.

Baſh. Pardon, gentlemen, but I'll maintain, that it is *natural* for actors, here and there, *not* to comprehend the meaning of their characters—for if, as Shakeſpear aſſerts, that "All the world's a ſtage, and all the men and women merely players," how *few* people do we find in the *world*, that critically *underſtand* the characters they are performing. It is, therefore, natural, ſometimes to appear ignorant of the parts we play. This act

act is quite tame, compared with the firſt.—Major Dagger, as you are an officer, did you not think the battles were ill-conducted?

Dag. Too *tamely*, I thought.

Baſh. Too tamely! Perhaps you forgot it was a *comedy* that was repreſenting. It would have been ridiculous to have made 'em fight as *ſeriouſly*, as though it had been a tragedy—But you think, gentlemen, for a *firſt* act it will do.

Omnes. O wonderfully!

Baſh. And you, Mr. Snarl, do approve it?

Snarl. So *much*, that I wiſh the *ſecond* act as well *over*.

Baſh We will now then proceed to the THIRD and *laſt* act.

Mid. But where's the *ſecond?*

Baſh. Fore gad, I thought you would aſk me that queſtion! Ha! ha! ha!—You muſt know that we call this a *dreſs* rehearſal—and, as there is nothing but *low* comedy in the ſecond act, I thought we might as well paſs it over to-night. Upon my ſoul, there is ſcarce any thing worth hearing in it.

Dag. I can truſt you for the truth of that?

Baſh. And not the leaſt connected with the third.

Epic. I am convinced of that—but don't you treat us with a proceſſion?

Baſh. To be ſure—What comedy could proceed without a proceſſion? I mean to laſh the Times in this act—a ſatire upon our modern follies!

Mid. Take care, leſt the audience laſh you in return—and give a reciprocal ſatire on the follies of the night.

Baſh.

Baſh. You're a wit—Come, gentlemen, we are detaining the audience. *(Reads.)* " *Act the third, Scene the firſt—The inſide of Tatius's palace. Enter the* Fool *with a letter in his hand—and ſpeaks a ſoliloquy.*"

Fool. " By my troth I have made a *great* puſh " for a *narrow* eſcape with my life.—If ever I de- " pend on a man's honour again, may honour be " all my dependence hereafter. What a pity, that " fortune-tellers cannot foretel their own for- " tunes—yet, were that the caſe, we ſhould have " no fortune-tellers. Well—great ſpeed ſpoils " breeding.——

Snarl. But, Mr. Fool——

Baſh. Pſha! ſir, how the devil can he make a ſoliloquy if you will interrupt him?

Fool. " Here am I entruſted with a letter from " Herfilia to her mother, the queen—good; but " how is it good?—becauſe it is not as yet bad.— " Yet don't I like it—I fear ſhe repents her return " —if ſo, my fortune's ſpoilt for conniving at " it—Take it ſhe's pleas'd—bad again; for, " when her huſband is tir'd of her, which in the " courſe of nature muſt ſoon be, then does he " murder me, for provoking him to reſcue her. " At all events, I muſt keep the family at va- " riance—for whilſt there's an *oppoſition*, I can " make my own terms.—Therefore, open, wax! " —and let's ſee what we have to depend upon."

[*Breaks the letter, and reads it.*

Mid. I know that there are raſcals enough in the world to provoke family broils, merely to profit from their confuſion; but I don't like the opening of that letter.

Baſh.

Baſh. It was a long while before I could perſuade myſelf to do it. But I found, that few comedies could go on without overlooking ſuch *trifling* improprieties, as *breaking of letters, forgeries, lies, thefts,* and ſo forth.

Fool. (Reads.) "My dear mama,"——Ha! "ha! that's affectionate."

Mid. But rather too free, even from a daughter to a queen!

Baſh. In truth, I wiſh 'em to be thought a happy family *within themſelves,* and, therefore, lay aſide all pomp of ſhew, and dignity of conſequence.

Fool. (Reads on.) "My dear mama, your lov-"ing child, your pretty darling ſends this greet-"ing—The ſorrow"—Hum! hum!—the re-"gret—hum! hum! provok'd me—ſo—ſo——"That will do."

Baſh. Now, had he not open'd that letter, he might poſſibly have encouraged a reconciliation to his own deſtruction—*(Reads.)* "*The king's approach ſounded by a trumpet—the queen's by a hautboy*"—I admire theſe little diſtinctions —"*Enter the king and queen, attended by* ALL *the court.*"—Kings in thoſe days did not depend upon the love of their ſubjects, as they do now. Egad, it was as much as their lives were worth, to have appeared like a *mortal,* without a regiment tagg'd to their heels.

Mid. The very beſt diſtinction you have made yet. But you cannot ſurely intend that ſo *young a creature* ſhould *perſonate* the *queen, mother* to *Herſilia!* Why, ſhe appears *ten* years *younger* than her *daughter.*

Baſh.

Baſh. I allow, *that* ſeems ridiculous—But, Herſilia being the *principal female* character, the *eldeſt* daughter naturally takes it, whilſt her *mother* the *queen*, being but a *ſecondary* part, is given to the *youngeſt*;—but we meet with as great improprieties on every ſtage.—Now, ſir, if you pleaſe.

Tatius. "It ſaddens much our ſovereignty to "ſee a ſemblance of ſo ſevere a ſorrow ſideling "on the cheek of thee, our queen! Be thou "thyſelf the interpreter of theſe tears."

Queen. "Your gracious majeſty, *for once*, has "bade me ſpeak my mind."

Dag. If ſhe has never been allowed to ſpeak her mind, before I don't wonder at her crying.

Fool. "If it may pleaſe your majeſty, me-"thinks that I can dry thy royal conſort's tears "without a handkerchief."

Snarl. A great ſaving, i'faith.

Tatius. "Speak, Fool—What is thy plea-"ſure?"

Fool. "To pleaſe thee—thy majeſty—the "princeſs, your daughter, ſends me.—But here "ſhe comes." [*Muſic without—Enter dancers, who foot it before their majeſties.*]

King. "This dancing, as I did not order it, "does amaze me much—I cannot look at it.—(*Turns away*).

Baſh. I make him ſay thus much to produce the effect of Herſilia's approach. (*Reads*).

Enter HERSILIA *unſeen by* HIS *Majeſty, and kneels before* HER *Majeſty.*

Baſh. Obſerve how cloſe I ſtudy the taſte of the times. No ſong takes ſo well with an *Engliſh* audience,

audience, as your little, ſimple ones, beginning, or ending with a *neat, pretty* FRENCH turn.—Now liſten.—I muſt pray your Majeſty to be a little more round, ſince you are not ſuppoſed to hear the ſong.

AIR—HERSILIA.

Dans vos yeux thy joy I ſee,
Gliſt'ning at my liberty!
Let it gliſten, and combine
All the tenderneſs of mine—
Never will I bid adieu
To the brightneſs de vos yeux!

Tongues in fault'ring accents ſpell,
What the eyes expreſſive tell,
If we ſorrow, if we ſmile,
If we ſpeak with faith, or guile,
Every paſſion one may view
Strongly pictur'd dans les yeux.

King. "Surely our ears with muſic were de-
"lighted! Ah! my daughter, Herſilia!—Can I
"truſt my eyes?"

Herſ. "You may."

King. "Can I truſt my ears, too?"

Herſ. "You may."

King. "O ye gods, is it poſſible?"

Dag. *O ye gods, is it poſſible*, indeed!

Baſh. You may have obſerved, gentlemen, that when any character upon the ſtage is taken by ſurprize, it is not an eaſy matter to move him out of it.

King.

King. "Art thou then returned from Romu-
"lus?"

Herſ. "Don't you ſee I am—and if you will
"but——

King. "We will hear no more—away."

Queen. "Retire, my dear—For lo! I ſee a
"gathering ſtorm, ſhooting from the horizon
"of his brows.—[*Exit* Herſilia.]—Suppoſe,
"my dear, you take a turn i'the garden, and
"compoſe yourſelf."

King. "Don't plague me, for I am vexed—
"O 'twas a match I had ſet my heart upon—a
"match that never will be matched again.——
"Fool, come hither—you are in my daughter's
"confidence—how came this to paſs?"

Fool. "Very *finely*, my liege, ſince it is come
"to a *fine paſs*—Now, *paſs* has many meanings,
"and ſince the *paſs* that I mean, cannot allude to
"the *paſt*—therefore am I *paſt* the meaning of
"your *paſs*."

King. "I don't comprehend the Fool."

Snarl. Nor any *one elſe*, I dare be ſworn.

Fool. "Now to the point—Herſilia is your
"daughter, agreeable to the *Queen's own report*."

Queen. "Thou art ſcandalous, Fool."

Fool. "Then, madam, doſt thou *ſpeak ſcan-*
"*dalous*—Try again—Sire, Herſilia is your
"daughter, *contrary* to the *Queen's own* report!"

King. "This is *approaching* unto treaſon."

Fool. "Then, leſt I *meet with* treaſon—I'll fly
"the company of kings." [*Runs off.*

Baſh. (*Laughs heartily*). O, excellent! charm-
ing!—You ſee, without anſwering any one queſ-
tion, the Fool, by his *force of wit*, has *ſatisfied*
the king and *every body elſe*.

Snarl.

Snarl. The *audience* excepted.

King. "I am ſatisfied—we will to our coun-
"cil and talk this over." [*Exeunt omnes.*

Baſh. Talk to me of your Fools!—your Touchſtones!—Look at *my* Fool's features—hear *my* Fool's talk!—Why, if he were even paid for talking, he could not ſhine a greater Fool—a more accompliſh'd Fool.—Excuſe my warmth, gentlemen, but I felt the *Fool* ſo *ſtrong within* me, that I could not contain myſelf. But huſh! now I am going to introduce a character, for the propriety of which I depend upon your judgment. I mean to laſh the *abſurdities of faſhion.* Few comedies could go down without a character of *that* nature. So, I have forgot, that the piece now acting is ſuppoſed to be ſome hundred years back, merely to introduce a *buck* of the firſt water.—Is it allowable?

Epic. O dear, yes—for I have ſeen ſo many characters of that deſcription tugg'd in, without any reſpect to time and place, that I am convinced the audience will care little about it.

Baſh. But I aſſure you this—If the character, after it has been exhibited, does not meet your approbation I can *ſtrike* it *out,* without *affecting* the comedy;—and you muſt know, that I dreſſed it from one of the firſt *caricature* ſhops in town.

Mid. Then, were the opinions of the *whole audience* ſpoken in mine, I would condemn any thing that tended to encourage the *ſcandalous productions* of *ſuch* exhibitions. No man, I ſincerely feel, would be more alive to any encroachment made on the liberty of our preſs than myſelf; but when I behold characters of *amiable conduct*

and *unſullied honour* exhibited with *wanton ſcurrility*, merely to attract the paſſing multitude, I cannot but condemn *ſuch deſigns* as *perverting* the good intent of *wholeſome ſatire*, by the encouragement of illiberal abuſe, and unjuſtifiable ſcandal!

Baſh. Very juſtly obſerved;—and, now upon what pretence, think you, do I introduce Mr. Twaddle, (ſuch is the gentleman's name) into this palace?—*Love!*—I make him actually in love with Tatius's Queen of the Sabines.

Dag. A ſad puppy to hope a return!

Baſh. Self-conceit is the grand *characteriſtic* of ſuch *puppies*. But the grand effect of all, is his *entré* on the ſtage—for being obliged to *ſteal* him into the court, I have hit upon quite a new ſtyle of introduction of lovers to their miſtreſſes—I make him above being *ſtuff'd into a trunk* or *ſedan chair*, or ſuch ſtuff—therefore, I actually bring him in a COFFIN!—Won't that *aſtoniſh*, think you?

Snarl. Yes, egad, it muſt cauſe a *dead* ſurprize; but don't you think the appearance of ſuch a thing muſt naturally have attracted the notice of the pages, guards, &c. of the court?

Baſh. Yes—but a *coffin* is a kind of thing that few people wiſh to *trouble themſelves about*, while they are aſſured it does not concern themſelves; nay, indeed, would be even ſorry to find it *ſtop* with them. But, ſilence! the corps is coming.

Enter ONE *Man, bearing a Coffin.*

Baſh. (To the bearer). Stop ſir—Be careful where you put it—ſince you muſt know, Mr. Snarl, by there being only *one* bearer of it, that the body cannot be within it—now mind the effect.

effect.—*(Reads). Enter Twaddle, full dreſs'd from out of the coffin.*—Come, Mr. Twaddle—Hark! *(a knocking heard from the bottom of the coffin).*—What the devil!—the undertaker ſurely hasn't nail'd down the top of the coffin! *(tries to open it)* hey! no.—Why, Mr. Twaddle, what is the matter? Why don't you come forward?

Twad. (from below) You havn't plac'd the coffin, ſir, right over the trap door, and I can't get into it.

Baſh. Egad, I thought ſome ſuch thing—the whole effect of a grand *entré* ſpoil'd by this awkward trick.—*(He replaces the coffin, and Twaddle comes out, dreſſed in all the abſurdity of faſhion).*—Turn round, ſir—about and about again—there, gentlemen, what think you of this *walking ſatire?*—You could not find a more complete beau though you were to parade *Bond-ſtreet* all day long.

Mid. And yet you might pick from a *great variety* too.

Epic. Do you mean *it* to ſay any thing?

Mid. I hope not—*it* was a long while coming on, and the ſooner *it* is off the better—and, if the *ſtage of life*, as well as the mimic *ſtage*, was to be drained of *ſuch characters*, ſociety would experience no very great loſs.

Baſh. Mr. Twaddle, we ſhall have no more occaſion for you—and, therefore, you may now dreſs for the *proceſſion* as ſoon as you pleaſe.——

[*Exit* Twaddle.

Now, gentlemen, out of the way—Here is a ſcene of ſome ſpirit.—*(Reads.) Enter Sulphurius, puſh'd in by his father, Tremulus.*

Trem. "Ungenerous boy! to riſk the king's diſpleaſure for a woman. Do you know the in-

" *tereſt* you may loſe?—the *money* you may
" loſe?"

Baſh. Ever make your *old men mercenary.*

Sul. " Money, with intereſt ev'n at *cent* per
" *cent*,
" Would never make my love appear content.
" Then why, for love ſhould I ſuch riches
" claim,
" Where gold would melt before love's burning
" flame."

" *Trem.* " *D—n it*, you little raſcal—now—
" now—don't put me in a paſſion—I ſay, *d—n* it
" don't make me angry.—Now mind, I ſay *d——n*
" *it* don't."

Mid. But why make the old gentleman *ſwear* ſo?

Baſh. O Lud, ſir, how can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? Do you ever meet with an *old* man's character on the ſtage, that does not make all his *wit* conſiſt in a *d—n*?

Mid. Then 'tis a pity that the audience don't return it with a *damn.*

Baſh. Then you'll be ſo good, Mr. Tremulus, as not to *ſwear* through the *remainder* of your paſſion.

Sul. " O my Herſilia, let but thy heavenly
" looks attend me through my trial, and I will
" ſtare 'em to confuſion—would I were an
" *humble* cottager feeding my innocent lambs by
" her angel ſide, I might be happier!"

Baſh. Natural enough for a *great* man to wiſh himſelf *any thing* in the *hour of danger.*

Sul. " But we delay."

Trem. " We do."

Sul. " Then had we better go?"

Trem.

Trem. "We had."

[*Exit* Sulphurius, *leaning on his father's arm.*

Baſh. (Read)—Scene the ſecond—The council chamber—the King ſeated—the great people of the ſtate attending.—Chorus of the privy council.—Huſh!—the privy council is going to ſing in chorus.

CHORUS—*Privy Council.*—(Jove in his chair.)

The king on his throne,
Though ſeated alone—
When he looks,
O Gad zooks,
How we fear!
With a frown
Knocks men down;
With a ſmile
Can beguile
Them to think all their cares are good cheer!
Lawyers are fools,
Who judge by muſty rules;
His word,
Though abſurd,
Is our law!
Though the fate
Of this ſtate,
Oft muſt wait
Our debate;
He'll *diſpenſe*
With *our* ſenſe
For a *ſtraw!*
Since his *arms*
Speak alarms,

That will balk
All our talk;
And confute
Us quite mute,
With their *jaw!!!*

Tat. "Gentlemen, we thank you—What *ad-*
"*dreſs* is that waiting our pleaſure without?"
Officer. "The *city* one, pleaſe your majeſty—
"they approach unto your majeſty in perſon,
"to congratulate your majeſty on the *happy*
"*union* of your daughter with Romulus."
Tat. "How's this—do they mean to affront
"our perſon?—Tell them, if they had not been
"in *ſuch a hurry* to *addreſs* us, they might have
"learnt that our *daughter* had been *diſappointed*
"of her marriage."
Priv. Counſ. "With your majeſty's moſt graci-
"ous permiſſion, we will now impeach Sulphu-
"rius."
Tat. "Our will is granted—How, now?"

Re-enter Officer.

Off. "The citizens, ſire, feel ſorry at your
"diſappointment—and, ſince they are come ſo
"far, and have been at the *trouble* of *dreſſing*,
"and of beſpeaking a *dinner* againſt their *re-*
"*turn*, they humbly hope that you will permit
"them to *condole* with your majeſty for the ſaid
"diſappointment."
Tat. "We thank them, but are engaged.—
"Bring in the priſoner."

Enter

Enter SULPHURIUS *in chains.*

Tat. "Know'ſt thou, young man, how *great* "the *offence* is that brings thee here?"

Sul. "I do—It is an offence againſt *nature*, "*juſtice*, and *propriety*."

Snarl. That it is, indeed!

Tat. "We will hear no more!—we *tranſport* "thee."

Mid. Very abrupt—Don't the priſoner make his defence?

Baſh. Why ſhould he? No *addreſs* to the *paſſions* would have any effect *here*—and, ſince there are no *fees* to be *increased* by the *delay*, I thought it would ſeem *unnatural* to *prolong* the trial;—but, in truth, his fate was *ſettled before* his trial came on. *(Reads).—Enter Herſilia running—ſhe flies to Sulphurius—looks in his face, and faints.*—Does not that call forth your pity?

Snarl. Yes, indeed, *you* have our *pity* moſt deſervedly.

Tat. But pray, Mr. Baſhful, is all this to paſs before me and my council?

Baſh. I never once thought of that—Let me ſee—O I have it.—You and your council ſhall retire to a corner of the room, and affect to be in cloſe conference. Now, madam, if you will faint once more, we will not interrupt your recovery.

Herſ. (Faints again—and revives ſinging).

Whither this dream—ah! whether is it gone?
Ah! do not leave me—leave me thus alone!

Snarl. Very fine!

Epic. I ſuppoſe ſhe is *mad* now.

Herſ. "O Sulphurius! am I then bleſt once "more with a ſight of thee?—Never will we ſe- "parate again."

Sul. "Yes, you will, when you know as much "as I do.—Your papa has tranſported me!"

Herſ. "Oh! cruel king, and more cruel fa- "ther. But we will go together."

Sul. "Matchleſs conſtancy!—Will it *fatigue* "you to *ſing*, my dear?"

Herſ. "No, my love!"

DUET.

SULPHURIUS.

O ſay, loving girl, when the ſeas you've paſs'd over,
Don't you think you'll repent having follow'd your lover?
When our union's ſo *fix'd*, *nought* but *death* can *remove* it,
Don't you fear you'll *grow tir'd*, and ſoon diſapprove it?

HERSILIA.

O, no, doubting youth, all inconſtancy ſcorning,
I'll ſtudy all *night* how to pleaſe the next *morning*:
At breakfaſt, at dinner, at ſupper, to pleaſe you,
From the trouble of carving I'll joyfully eaſe you.

TOGETHER,

TOGETHER.

Thus, warm in our loves, we will ſail off together,
And brave all the rigorous climate and weather;
For, rich in ourſelves, we'll *ſcorn father and mother*,
And find *all relations* more fond in each other.

[*An alarum ſounded.*

Enter an Officer.

Off. "The troops of Romulus are cloſe upon "our walls!"

Sul. "O that theſe hateful chains were off, "I'd place them on the wriſt of Romulus, or "periſh in the attempt. Although my country "has given me up, I feel the fire of patriotiſm "ſtill within me that pleads for her forgiveneſs. "Give me a ſword!—My country for a ſword!"

Enter a ſecond Officer.

Sec. Off. "It is but a falſe alarm.—A few "choſen people from the camp of Romulus are "come in friendly garb to treat of peace.—May "they enter, fire?"

Tat. "They may;—but firſt releaſe the priſoner—had we been in danger, he would have "aſſiſted us.—Sulphurius, Herſilia is thine—"*take* her—and Heaven *bleſs* you both."

Snarl. They do *patch up marriages* on the ſtage to be ſure in the *oddeſt* way imaginable.

[*Enter*

[*Enter a body of people two by two, accompanied with muſic—and after much ceremony a letter is delivered. The king gives a nod of approbation, and they march out again.*]

Snarl. All this is vaſtly fine, I dare ſwear, if we could but underſtand it.

Mid. Was all this form to deliver a letter?

Baſh. To be ſure. It comes from one king to another.

Tat. (To the Council.) "We are entreated "herein to attend with our court, and as many "of our friends as we chuſe to bring in our "hands, a grand entertainment given by Ro- "mulus, to prove his good will towards us, and "that he has forgiven the elopement of our "daughter.—Shall we accept of this invita- "tion?"

Coun. All bow conſent.

Tat. "Let us retire then, and prepare our- "ſelves to wait upon them.

[*Exeunt king and council.*

Baſh. (Reads.) Now for the laſt and grand ſcene, —a beautiful plain, terminated with a diſtant view of the camp.

Enter ROMULUS *and* MARCUS.

Rom. "Marcus, I've ſomething for your pri- "vate ear,
"With which I'll truſt you, ſince you're prov'd "ſincere:
"The Sabine king, with all his noble court,
"Doth to our camp this very day reſort—

Accompanied

" Accompanied with all his beauteous dames,
" To be ſpectators of our martial games!
" A ſturdy regiment, in cloſe diſguiſe,
" Near to this plain, in ſecret ambuſh lies;
" That while the Sabine virgins in amaze,
" With wond'ring rapture o'er our actions gaze,
" May, by a ſignal of a nod or ſtamp,
" Each ſieze a girl and bear her to our camp—
" Where full ten thouſand men of valour tried,
" Are arm'd, and ready to protect each bride.
" But huſh! they come."——

Enter TATIUS, SULPHURIUS, QUEEN, HERSILIA, *and Ladies, with one or two Attendants.*

Baſh. Heavens, ſir, how's this?—Have they given your majeſty no *more attendants* to accompany you to an enemy's camp?

Tat. The truth is, ſir, I was obliged to *lend* all my *ſoldiers* to aſſiſt in the *proceſſion* that Romulus is preparing. *(They ſalute).*

Snarl. Is your proceſſion then ſo great?

Baſh. Yes, indeed.—Moſt proceſſions are without any meaning, and leſt mine ſhould be judged ſo, I have made it perfectly *claſſical, emblematical,* and *hiſtorical.* I begin with the *entry* of the *deſtruction* of *Troy*—*lead* you with *Æneas* regularly to the *birth* of *Regulus,* and even proceed down to the *twelve Cæſars!*

Epic. Wonderful!

Baſh. Which naturally produces a little *ſhort ſword, broad ſword,* and *back ſword;*—and then I conclude with the grand ENLEVEMENT of the *ladies,*—Now for it—ſtand aſide, gentlemen.

[*During*

[*During the Proceſſion* Baſhful *explains every thing as it comes on—affects to beat time to the muſic—and applauds different parts with great energy.*]

1. *Light muſic. Venus leading on Minerva and Juno, tempting them forward by the apple.*

2. *Martial muſic. Jupiter and Mars diſputing.*

3. *A painting of Helen and Paris flying from Menelaus.*

4. *Agmemnon and Menelaus—the laſt with golden* HORNS.

5. *Neſtor and Ulyſſes riding on a wooden horſe.*

6. *A painting of the deſtruction of the city of Troy.*

7. *Æneas carrying his father on his ſhoulders, leading Aſcanius.*

8. *A painting of* Romulus *and* Remus, *ſuckled by a wolf.*

(*Romulus here falls into the proceſſion, to the tune of* God ſave the King, *followed by twelve lictors with faſces*).

9. *Then follow the ſeven kings of Rome, ending with a painting of Tullia driving over her father's body.*

10. *Brutus paſſing ſentence on his ſons.*

11. *Cincinnatus in the ruſtic habit.*

12. *The Decemviri.*

13. *Picture of Virginius ſtabbing his daughter.*

14. *The Triumvirate—Cæſar, Craſſus, and Pompey—Cato holding over their heads theſe words:—"Now Rome has loſt her liberty!"*

15. *The concluſion—a* dance *by the twelve Cæſars.*

(*After which, ſome* fencing, ſparring—*in the midſt of which, by a ſignal, the Sabine ladies are ſurprized*

prized, and taken off the ſtage by ſoldiers—and after a loud ſcream *the Curtain drops*).

BASHFUL, SNARL, DAGGER, MIDDAY *and* EPIC, *before the curtain.*

Snarl. You ſurely don't mean this as a concluſion, Mr. Baſhful.

Baſh. How can it be otherwiſe?—All the *actors* and *actreſſes* are *run away*—of courſe the *piece* muſt *ſtop*;—but I thought that would ſurprize you. Indeed, I meant it ſhould *aſtoniſh*.

Mid. And you have *ſucceeded* wonderfully.

Baſh. O yes, it will do—it will do—and with a few more of *your* remarks, I have no doubt of rendering it worthy of even a public audience. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, if you are not particularly engaged to-morrow evening, I ſhall be happy in *your company* to ſee this piece *repeated*.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

FINIS.